

Rationale for Revisiting ABC Recommendation for Golden Tilefish:

The Council is willing to accept the risk of overfishing associated with an ABC of 362,000 pounds (whole weight) for 2019 and 2020. This is the ABC level currently implemented through an emergency rule for 2018. The Council accepts the risk associated with this ABC level for the following reasons:

- The Council can accept a higher risk level. Based on prior discussions regarding ABC control rule modifications, both the Council and SSC agree that it is the Council's responsibility to set the accepted risk of overfishing. Revisions to the ABC control rule are currently under consideration by the Council that would allow the Council to specify the risk level, but such provision are not yet in effect.
- The SSC has the ability to deviate from the existing ABC control rule.
- This ABC level will only be in effect until the next assessment is completed. A standard assessment is planned for 2019 to address issues noted by the SSC with the previous update.
- The level of harvest proposed by the Council is in effect for 2018, and projections indicate it will result in a fishing mortality rate of 0.173, below the overfishing limit of $F_{msy}=0.24$.
- This level of harvest represents a 42% reduction from the annual catch limit that was in effect prior to 2018, and was in effect during the 2012-2014 period that led to the stock assessment finding that overfishing was occurring (terminal $F / F_{msy} = 1.22$)
- Current management actions successfully control the fishery to the ACL. From 2012 to 2017, cumulative commercial landings totaled 102% of the commercial ACL, and annual landings exceeded the ACL in only one of those 6 years.
- The P* approach applied to golden Tilefish has resulted in an unusually large difference between OFL and ABC, creating the largest buffer of any SAFMC stock. This unusual buffer has been acknowledged by the SEFSC and discussed by the SSC on previous occasions, and no clear explanation for it is available.
- The Council is concerned by the considerable social and economic impacts resulting from current ABC recommendation.
- The golden Tilefish fishery is primarily (97%) allocated to the commercial sector. The primary harvest occurs in a longline fishery which takes place over about 3 months from an opening on January 1 to a closure around mid-March when the its ACL is met.